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State Representative • Serving the 75th Assembly District

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## Sen. Bewley's Fish Stories Don't Hold Water

**Madison** – Spring is here, and with it, fishing season – so Wisconsinites are used to hearing tall tales about the big fish their neighbors caught. Usually when politicians tell fish stories, they at least try not to make their own constituents look bad. Not so Senator Janet Bewley, who told some painful whoppers today at the expense of people from her own district.

Today, Sen. Bewley took to the radio to tell two fish tales. The biggest whopper involves Republican efforts to significantly expand funding for broadband, an effort supported by all members of the Rural Wisconsin Initiative, 26 rural legislators who have come together to find meaningful solutions to rural issues. Last year, the RWI called for \$10 million for broadband funding, and Assembly Bill 123, which she referenced, accomplished that and more. The bill had bipartisan support, but Sen. Bewley apparently didn't care about rural needs enough to sign on – she passed on both bills.

Nor did she care enough to check her facts. Governor Walker wasn't able to accept \$23 million in the first round of federal funding because Wisconsin's program to wire our libraries was more tightly focused and better planned – federal rules were sloppy, and didn't actually work for Wisconsin. In fact, Wisconsin's own program got the job done.

Not content to call her broadband fish “this big,” Sen. Bewley then took a quote completely out of context. It's true that one left-wing UW Madison professor didn't like the fact that the Republican legislature tripled broadband spending to \$1.5 million per year. But *this year's* bill takes a leap forward, putting funding for infrastructure above \$10 million. The simple fact is that Republicans have been responsible in putting together a broadband grant program, making sure it works in the right ways and for the right people, and then expanding it to make sure it fully funds as many expansion projects as possible.

Meanwhile, Sen. Bewley's tall tales are contradicted by her own constituents, two of whom had made the 3.5 hour drive down to Madison to talk about how meaningful AB 123 would be for them, and how important Wisconsin's broadband program had already been for their communities. These included a small business owner who is able to run an entertainment company for troops stationed overseas because of a project funded by this grant program, and the CEO of a local telecom company that has done projects funded in part by the grant program. So far, the program has connected at least 37 businesses and 982 residences in her district, as well as Big Top Chautauqua, right in her back yard – would she rather they not be done?

Sen. Bewley was apparently so embarrassed about how silly her other whopper looked that she played catch-and-release with it. After claiming that a bill to allow automated delivery drones wouldn't help Wisconsin, Sen. Bewley jumped on Facebook to say these same drones “could make life easier for urban residents and businesses.” The bill passed the Senate on a voice vote. Since she didn't ask for a roll call vote, we'll never know how she voted – but she didn't object.

I live in the district Sen. Bewley represents and my office door is always open, so why hasn't she come to me with concerns? Sen. Bewley can tell all the fish tales she likes – the real story shows that she's playing with minnows.

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